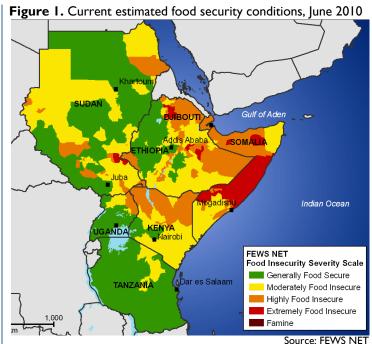




EAST AFRICA Regional Food Security Update

June 2010

- Despite the lingering effects of past droughts, conflicts, and other structural factors, regional food security has improved due to increased food availability and enhanced livestock productivity and prices following improved rangeland conditions and the lifting of livestock import bans. Further improvements in food security conditions are expected due to the July harvest in the bimodal areas of Uganda, parts of Kenya, and Somalia.
- Cereal prices in the region are declining, especially in the main surplus areas. These declines are likely to boost access to food for households dependent on the market and net food-importing countries. However, if prices continue to fall and reach break-even levels, this is likely to create production disincentives for the next harvest. There have also been significant post-harvest losses in parts of Kenya due to lack of effective post-harvest handling and storage facilities.



For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

• Food insecurity is likely to increase in Sudan and the SNNP region of Ethiopia over the coming months due to the early start of the lean season. In most parts of southern Sudan and in the Darfur and Red Sea states of northern Sudan, food insecurity is likely to deteriorate through September (although improvements are expected earlier in some parts of southern Sudan) due to a combination of the effects of conflict, drought, high prices, and poor past season production.

Current food security conditions

Continued improvements in food security conditions have been observed throughout the region following sustained normal to above-normal March-May rainfall, the main season for pastoral areas as well as cropping areas of the eastern equatorial sector of the region. In cropping areas, especially in the marginal agricultural areas, there has been a significant increase in overall food availability following the good October-December rains.

However, the early start of the season and heavy rains in the March-May season, coupled with the lack of proper storage facilities during the harvest in the southeastern lowlands, has contributed to high levels of post-harvest losses, particularly in parts of Kenya. As a result, increased fungal infestation is increasingly becoming a public health concern, especially if some of this contaminated maize is eaten. Moreover, because of the scale of food stock losses at the household level, food security is compromised. Despite serious post-harvest losses in localized areas, regional food availability and the outlook remain favorable due to significant surpluses from the main cereal-producing areas, especially Uganda, as well as the marginal cropping areas that had an unusually good harvest from the October-December season. Current cropping conditions are also favorable in the main cereal growing areas of the eastern sector, especially in western Kenya and bimodal areas of Uganda.

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FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity. The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government. Similarly, sustained improvements in rangeland conditions have also occurred due to the continuation of good rains in the March to May season after the above-normal October-December season associated with the El Niño event. This will result in improved livestock body conditions, productivity, and value, translating into improved food security conditions in pastoral areas. However, some disruptions could occur in localized areas where the heavy March to May seasonal rains damaged some of the main food and non-food supply routes, which could lead to a short-term decline in food availability and high prices due to increased transportation costs. Some of the affected areas include northwestern Kenya, southern Somalia (Juba and Shabelle region), and parts of the Somali region of Ethiopia (Gode zone). In Kenya, floods have displaced 20,400 people, killed 90 people, and destroyed public infrastructure such as schools, roads, bridges, water supplies, and irrigation facilities. Moreover, excess rain and flooding in Kenya caused damage to crops in the fields, flooded food stores, and contaminated about 200,000 MT of maize (three weeks of Kenya's national consumption) with aflatoxin. Similarly, in southern Somalia, river floods destroyed over 24,000 ha of farmland, displacing about 45,000 people.

Despite generally improving conditions in the region, the number of food insecure people is likely to increase in the *meher*-dependent areas of **southwestern Ethiopia as well as southern Sudan**, which are experiencing acute food declines due to poor production last year and the consequent extended lean season this year. Similar trends are also expected in the **Darfur and Red Sea states of northern Sudan** due to the effects of conflict, drought, and high staple food prices following the poor harvest in 2009/10. Though the onset of rains in June will likely generate labor opportunities, it will also increase the risk of waterborne diseases and thus the incidence of malnutrition during the lean season (June-September).

In **Somalia**, continued political instability and confrontations between armed groups in the country remain major constraints to food and livelihood security in the south and central regions. The renewed conflicts have continued to affect the food security of poor, market-dependent urban households and IDPs. The armed conflict and insecurity is escalating and continuing to drive thousands of people from their homes, especially in Mogadishu and parts of the central regions. In addition, the heightened insecurity is also disrupting trade, economic activities, and transportation networks, leading to the loss and destruction of assets, and limiting humanitarian access.

In **Tanzania**, food security has continued to improve at the national level. Household food availability has increased following the ongoing *msimu* harvests. The situation is expected to improve further after the start of *masika* crop harvests in bimodal areas in June. Following good production prospects around the country and in neighboring countries, the Tanzanian government has lifted the export ban on cereals. In **Djibouti**, a recent government-led joint assessment mission indicates that 120,000 people in rural areas are in need of humanitarian assistance up to the end of the year.

Crop disease update

Crop diseases, particularly cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD), continue to have an impact on food security in Tanzania and Uganda. In Tanzania, CMD and CBSD have been a significant problem in the Lake Victoria zone and coastal regions, while Banana Bacterial Wilt (BXW) has affected crops in Kagera. These diseases reduce household food production and incomes from crop sales, and limit commercial cassava processing and income opportunities. In urban areas where wheat is an important dietary component, soaring wheat prices have forced many households, especially the poor, to shift to cassava. As cassava production decreases due to disease, cassava prices are expected to rise.

Cassava is also an important staple food in Uganda, and during some seasons, farmers in the central regions (Mukono, Kayunga, Wakiso, Luwero, Iganga, Kamuli districts) have lost crops because of CMD infestations. Although food insecurity among poor farm households in the affected regions is not a concern at present (because other food and cash crops such as sweet potatoes, yams and maize are available), CMD and CBSD are likely to reduce the supply of cassava, which will cause prices to rise and affect household food access. Likewise, households that depend on the sale of cassava to markets would face reduced income and have difficulty meeting basic household needs.

Seasonal Progress

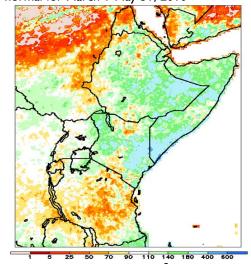
The performance of the March to May seasonal rains have been favorable, as most cropping and pastoral areas in the eastern equatorial sector received timely normal to above-normal rainfall (Figure 2). As a result, crop production and rangeland conditions are expected to be normal to above normal (Figures 3 and 4). In lowland areas of the Somali region of

Ethiopia, northern and western Kenya, and southern Somalia, torrential rains caused localized damage to infrastructure, disrupted the flow of essential food and non-food supplies, and in some cases caused temporary displacement of people and caused damage to standing crops. However, in parts of southern Sudan and the north-central areas and southeastern lowlands of Kenya, rainfall performance was below normal, which is also reflected in vegetation performance (Figure 4). This localized below-normal performance is likely to have minimal effect on pastoralists because of increased grazing options in the adjacent areas, where rangeland conditions are favorable. Apart from parts of southern Sudan, seasonal performance in the region is generally beneficial for crop performance, pasture replenishment, and water recharge as well hydropower generation. Currently, there is a general cessation of the March-May rains in Tanzania, southeast and northern Kenya, eastern Ethiopia, and parts of central Somalia, but moderate to heavy rains will continue along the East African coastal strip and the western sector (over most of Uganda and western Kenya). The rainfall belt is shifting northwards to Ethiopia and Sudan and the ECMWF seasonal forecast indicates the likelihood of normal to above-normal June-September rainfall, which is critical for cropping in southern Sudan and Ethiopia.

Markets and trade

Market prices for the main staples have continued to decline in the main producing areas in response to increased seasonal supply. These trends are likely to continue as the harvest commences in July in bimodal areas of Uganda and Kenya. Although price declines are good for marketdependant households, they will likely have a negative impact on producers, especially in cases where prices have fallen below break-even levels, which could result in production losses. Consequently, unless governments purchase the excess cereals, these trends could dampen producer incentives and reduce production in the next season. Crossborder trade in the region is gaining more and more significance and is expected to play a major role in regional food security. Data from five sites monitored by FEWS NET recorded that over 14,000 MT of cereals and pulses crossed the border between Uganda and Kenya during February-May this year. This will likely be boosted by the closer integration of the EAC when the common market protocol is signed in July this year. Livestock prices at the farm gate and in markets have increased after the lifting of livestock export bans in the region; this will improve food security and livelihoods in pastoral communities.

Figure 2. Rainfall estimates—percent of normal for March 1-May 31, 2010



Source: NOAA/CPC **Figure 3.** Crop conditions as of May 31, 2010

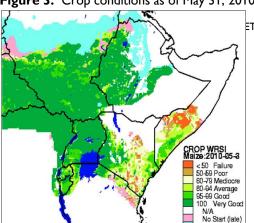


Figure 4. Vegetation conditions, May 2010

